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Avery Wilson

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LIFE LESSONS

By Avery Wilson

SWOSU Timed W.A.R.P. (Writing and Research Project) 2nd Place Winner



Throughout life, we will meet people who are either a blessing or a lesson. I've had my fair share of lessons with someone I used to consider a close friend. This summer I found out I have ADHD and anxiety. I really leaned on a friend and confided in her. She acted like she understood and made me feel like I wasn't alone. However, when the time came for her to stand up for me and defend me when I was-

n't there, she let me

down. I was

hurt that

someone I

trusted so

much could so

easily stand by

and watch as

somebody lied to

me and belittled

me. I felt like I was-

that even someone who understood my constant battle would

let me fight it alone. I was left out and bullied online. It's tak-

en months to learn to love myself again and see my worth.

The experience has taught me that no one has my back more

than my family, that everyone has their own struggles, and my

faith in God has grown even stronger.

Firstly, my family has seen me in my darkest hours,

yet they still love me unconditionally. They've proven time

and time again that they will always help me fight my ongoing

battles. When I thought I was alone because my friend had

stabbed me in the back," they were there to listen and see things from new perspectives. When my "friends" decided not to include me anymore, my sister was there to go with me and make memories that are worth more than the fake ones I once had. Although I fight with my sister, no one comes to my defense

quicker than she does. When I

had a panic attack at practice

and left, she was right behind

me, even though I told her to

stay. She took the conse-

quences with me and didn't

leave me alone. The

bond I have with my fam-

ily has grown stronger

since I've been hurt.

Secondly, I've learned that there are

girls just like me who don't know why they have a war against

themselves every day. There are girls who put on happy faces

when they're really not happy at all. The girls I used to call my

friends couldn't see the pain behind my smile and the tears

behind my eyes. Anxiety is real, it doesn't make you weak. It

makes you strong, because you fight battles every minute of

everyday and still manage to keep on going. According to Laura

Nott of the website *Elements and Behavior Health*, anxiety

disorders are the most common of all mental illnesses and

affect 25% of all teens and 30% of all teen girls. That's a lot of

(Continued on page 31)



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are the most common of all mental illnesses
and affect 25% of all teens and 30% of all teen girls.”**

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kids who are confused and hurting. I've made it my responsibility to be kind to everyone, because everyone has their own problems and struggles. Kevin Love, a famous NBA player, recently wrote an article “Everyone Is Going Through Something” on the *Players Tribune*. Love states in his article, “On November 5th, right after halftime against the Hawks, I had a panic attack. It came out of nowhere. I'd never had one before. I didn't even know if they were real. But it was real—as real as a broken hand or a sprained ankle. Since that day, almost everything about the way I think about my mental health has changed.” This has opened my eyes to the fact that I'm not the only one with a struggle.

Lastly, I've gotten closer to God. I have always been a Christian, but for a while, I resented God for giving me the hateful thoughts that flooded my mind and make me fight through this alone. I wanted to blame God, but I've learned that God didn't give me the evil thoughts and tough situations, Deuteronomy 31:6 says, “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you” (*New International Version*).

I've come to realize He gave me my family that has been more understanding and helpful than anyone and he

gave me my strength. It was not in his plan for me to be excluded and depressed. Jerimiah 29:11 says “‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’” (*New International Version*). God has given me a perspective on life that most teenagers and young adults don't have. I can put myself in other's situation and feel other people's struggles. I've been blessed with strength and empathy.

In conclusion, the friend that “stabbed me in the back” has taught me something that they don't teach in school and perhaps the most important lesson I will ever learn. I don't hate her and I'm not angry with her. I love her and I wish her the best of luck in her future endeavors. The experience has taught me that no one has my back more than my family, that everyone has their own struggles, and my faith in God has grown even stronger.

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“Everyone is going through something.”— Kobe Bryant
In *The Players Tribune*, after suffering an anxiety attack during an NBA game